Modern Compositions in Shakespeare's Honor

Mr. Mackaye's Masque and Mr. Farwell's Music—Old Settings Ignored—Barking and Crowing by Ariel's Spirits—Millenniums in the Interludes.

By H. E. KREHBIEL.

WHEN the manager in the prelude to Goethe's "Faust" had got his booth knocked up and wanted a play to put on it which should be fresh, new, important and also attractive, he confessed that he was hugely embarrassed because the playgoing crowd had read so much. So he calls to himself the Dramatic Poet and Merry Andrew and they take counsel together. The three personages represent imaginative art and lofty ideality, selfish business acumen and shrewd theatrical practice in the service of folly and frippery. The Poet pleads for the beauty, goodness and truth that are enduring; the Merry Andrew for a drama of life, a motley picture with a little light, much error and a flimmering of truth, something to amuse the child which man is even in his mature age. The Manager, careless of what is done so long as it fills his coffers, at last bids them to work at once without waiting for inspiration, impressing everything that presents itself to their ken, sun, moon, stars, beasts, birds, trees, rocks, fire, water, darkness, light, day and night:

"Thus in our booth's contracted sphere,
The circle of Creation will appear
And move, as we deliberately impel,
From Heaven across the World to Hell."

The tragedy, as eventually completed, sweeps over even a wider course, for it moves physically and spiritually from the throne of God through the world and hell and back again to the fringe of heaven, the place inhabited by beings, celestial and half-celestial, who float in the spaces where earth and heaven meet. That was the dramatic conception of the master mind of German poetry. Mr. Percy Mackaye, when he planned his masque for the celebration of the tercentenary of Shakespeare's death, seems to have been resolved not to be outdone in adventure by Goethe. His "Caliban by the Yellow Sands" seeks to exploit pretty much everything in the world of dramatic art and its accessories from the earliest historical times down to to-day, and to enlist for the eye, ear and mind a great many things which belong wholly to the sphere of learned speculation. It is with one phase of his vast phantasmagoria only that this department of The Tribune is concerned—the phase to which music is related—but even a superficial presentation of this phase would fill a book much larger than the printed copy of the masque, with all its intimations of what is to be presented in the historical interludes. It is so tremendous a mouthful that it will never be masticated, still less digested, by either authors, performers, readers or hearers. However, the play has been written, the scenario of the pageants laid out, some music composed, some music collated from pages printed in the past, rehearsals of singers and dancers have begun and a promise given that the universal revelation will be made at the Stadium of the City College in a fortnight. A proper preparation by the public would involve a long period of fasting and prayer, but since this cannot be asked of a busy people an attempt may be made to lift the curtain a little for the benefit of the readers of this journal.

The masque proceeds from Shakespeare's "Tempest" as the title and principal speaking characters suggest. "The theme of the masque—Caliban seeking to learn the art of Prospero"—says Mr. Mackaye, "is, of course, the slow education of mankind through the influence of coöperative art, that is, of the art of the theatre in its full social scope"; perhaps by this is meant something like Wagnerism plus the philosophical concepts which some interpreters inject into Wagner's artistic creations. Prospero is the spirit of this art shown at work through the ages and incarnated in the Epilogue in the person of Shakespeare. Ariel and Miranda, the latter of whom excites pity, and admiration in Caliban, are Prospero's agents. The art of Prospero, which in Shakespeare's play is the magic by which Ariel was released from the cloven pine tree in which the sprite had been confined by the "foul witch Sycorax," is conceived by Mr. Mackaye "as the art of Shakespeare in its universal scope: that many-visioned art of the theatre which, age after age, has come to liberate the imprisoned imagination of mankind from the fetters of brute force and ignorance; that same art which, being usurped and stifled by groping part-knowledge, prudery or lust, has been botched in its ideal aims and—like fire ill-handled or ill-hidden by a passionate child—has wrought havoc, hypocrisy and decadence. Caliban . . . is that passionate child-curious part of us all (whether as individuals or races), grovelling close to his original origins, yet groping up and staggering—with almost rhythmic falls and back-slidings—toward that serener plane of pity and love, reason and disciplined will where Miranda and Prospero commune with Ariel and his Spirits." The education and redemption of Caliban is accomplished by permitting him to be the spectator of a series of incidents presented on an inner stage from some of the plays of Shakespeare, from history and the records of the stage in classic antiquity and the popular life of Elizabethan England.

Thus far it is within the province of this writer to go in an exposition of the general plan of Mr. Mackaye's masque; now to its musical elements. These are of great variety, but they fall into two divisions so far as they are songs with texts taken from Shakespeare's plays and music incidental to the historical interludes and pageantry. Much of this has been composed for the masque by Mr. Arthur Farwell, who shall have his own say concerning his principles and methods elsewhere on this page. More interesting than this music because of its historical interest is the music associated with the third interlude depicting outdoor merrymaking in an English village in the lifetime of the poet. Here there is absence of the anachronism which runs riot everywhere else, and to the songs and dances we hope to recur in a later article. The motto of the masque is found in the opening lines of Ariel's song in "The Tempest," "Come unto these yellow sands," and this is the first of Shakespeare's lyrics that is introduced, though Ariel, before its appearance, sings disconnectedly the first two lines of "Where the Bee Sucks." For both songs Mr. Farwell might have found settings much more beautiful than his own in the works of composers who wrote when Shakespeare might still have been a living memory. In 1670, that is within less than fifty years after the publication of the first folio, John Banister composed music for "Come unto these yellow sands," and twenty years later Purcell followed his example. Banister was the leader of the band of Charles II, who had sent him to France to study his art. He composed music for "The Tempest" in collaboration with Pelham Humphreys, who had also been sent by Charles to study with Lully in Paris, and who, after he had returned to London, became the pupil of Henry Purcell, the greatest musician that England has produced. Purcell made his settings for Shadwell's production of "The Tempest" and the music of "Come unto these yellow sands" and "Where the Bee Sucks" is as fresh and beautiful to the cultivated taste of to-day as it has ever been. It would seem as if Mr. Farwell had made little, if any, study of the Purcell song, for both he and Mr. Farwell ignored an obvious improvement made by Purcell on Banister. The latter incorporated the dog's "Bow-wow" and chanticleer's "Cock-a-diddle-dow" in the song, despite Shakespeare's plain indication that the barkings were but noises heard from off stage ("Burthen, dispersedly, within"), and Mr. Farwell does the same thing. The result, besides an awkward interruption of the flow of melody, is a marring of the form of the lyric:

"Hark! hark!
The watch-dogs bark.
Hark, hark! I hear
The strains of strutting chanticleer."

Shakespeare's sprites bore the burthen while Ariel sang the song. Mr. Farwell's sprites call on us to hear the watch-dogs and then do the barking themselves—not a very artistic proceeding.

Ariel sings only a tiny fragment of "Where the Bee Sucks" (Mr. Mackaye putting them into the dialogue of the masque), but here Mr. Farwell might easily, properly and gracefully have permitted us to hear music which may have fallen into the ears of Shakespeare himself. The oldest extant setting of the song was made by Robert Johnson, a composer for the theatre, who was graduated as Bachelor of Music from Oxford University in 1597, in great likelihood before "The Tempest" was written. This may be a small matter, but ought not to be overlooked in the consideration of a masque confessedly designed to teach its lesson by historical methods.

The next use of a Shakespearian lyric is made in an excerpt from "Julius Cæsar"—the scene from Act IV, in which Lucius, asked to "touch his instrument a strain or two" to lighten the heart of Brutus, fall asleep while singing. "The boy sings to his lute" is the stage direction, but the song is not given. Mr. Mackaye introduces a stanza, "Fear no more the frown o' the great," from the duet sung by Guiderius and Arviragus in "Cymbeline." The music of the song, which begins "Fear no more the heat o' the sun," has not been preserved. The song is a dirge for Imogen; Mr. Mackaye must answer for its introduction as a solace for Brutus, whose only comment upon his boy's music is that it was "a sleepy tune."

The eighth inner scene in the masque is that in which Orlando comes upon the Duke and his company in the forest in "As You Like It," and the song is "Under the Greenwood Tree." There is a setting of this exquisite song as old as 1687, but Mr. Farwell preferred to make one of his own for two-part men's chorus. We forbear to institute a comparison. The next and last excerpt from the plays is from the scene in "The Merry Wives of Windsor," in which the company, invited to witness Falstaff's discomfiture in Windsor Forest, dance about the fat knight, pinch him, burn him with their torches and sing "Fie on sinful fantasy," etc. Concerning the music to which this chorus was sung nothing is known; the other songs in the comedy were sung to familiar airs. Mr. Farwell has made a unisonal chorus out of it without charm of any kind to commend it. At the end of the masque the chorus of Ariel's spirits repeats in song the last words of Prospero (now Shakespeare) to Miranda—

"We are such stuff
As dreams are made on, and our little life
Is rounded with a sleep."

—to music by Mr. Farwell, a brief phrase harmonized for four voices.

"Setebos was a frightful horned god of the Patagonians," says a Shakespearian commentator, and a traveller who visited Patagonia about the time when Shakespeare was born remarked in his "History of Travaile" that the natives "roared lyke bulles and cryed upon their great devill Setebos to help them." There is a great deal of this invoking of the "great devill" in the masque. It begins with it and the invocations are heard ever and anon to the end.

There are only two allusions to him in "The Tempest," where he is called the god of Caliban's dam, but in the masque he is presented to the eye as the idol within whose maw, instead of a cloven pine, Ariel was imprisoned, and from which Prospero delivered him. While the chorus of evil invokes Setebos the spirits of Ariel invoke Prospero, and so there is a great deal of hymning with Mr. Mackaye's words and Mr. Farwell's music. There is considerable characteristic force in both the literal and musical elements:

Spirits of Ariel:

"Prospero! Prospero!
Out of our earth-pain
Raise and array us
In splendor of order!
Pour on our chaos—
Prospero! Prospero!
Peace to our earth-pain!

Powers of Setebos:

"Setebos! Setebos!
Lord of our earth-bane,
Loose on his wrath way
The beast of thy jungle!
Pour on our pathway—
Setebos! Setebos!
Blood for thine earth-bane!"

Such song is likely to be a more effective ingredient in the masque than the spoken dialogue, which it is safe to say will be heard by only a small fraction of the audience. Other music of the same order, though not of the same dynamic and intervallic rudeness, are the choruses sung by the spirits when the cave of Setebos is transformed into Prospero's theatre and the Kings Francis I of France and Henry VIII clasp hands on the Field of the Cloth of Gold. Another graceful lyric, which invites good music (we do not know what it has received), is the song beginning "Spring, the sweet Spring, is the year's pleasant king," which Mr. Mackaye borrowed for the opening of his third act from Thomas Nash's comedy, "Summer's Last Will and Testament," brought out in A. D. 1600. There is no indication of the fact in the book or music of "Caliban," but it is probable that the round "Sumer is icumen in," which is to be used to introduce the English Interlude, will be sung to the original music. To ignore one of the most striking monuments in the history of music by substituting another setting of the words for that of the rota of the Monk of Reading, supposed to have been composed in the thirteenth century, would be an unpardonable crime against Clio. The famous processional hymn of Fortunatus, "Vexilla regis prodeunt," is also introduced in Gregorian unison.

How the historic interludes would have tested the skill and knowledge of any composer who should have attempted to consult archæological and historical verisimilitude can be imagined from the following hurried outline of them. In the first interlude are embraced an Egyptian chant and dance; but of Egyptian music the world knows absolutely nothing beyond the structure and possible capacity of the instruments as surmised from mural paintings. Also a chorus from the "Antigone" of Sophocles, for which Mr. Farwell has written a musical chant without melodic interest based upon three chords only. The action is to represent the rehearsal of the chorus in the theatre at Athens B. C. 440. We know a little more about Greek music than about Egyptian, but the relics of the music of the tragedies are summed up in a score or so of scattered notes.

The Originator, the Composer and the Conductor of the Shakespeare Tercentenary Masque.

Photo by Marceau.

Louis Koemmenich
Conductor of Oratorio Society

Arthur Farwell
Composer and Director of the Musical Production of Caliban

Mr. Percy Mackaye

Photo by DeWitt C. Ward.

In the third action Caligula, A. D. 40, is supposed to witness a farcical comedy in a Roman street, and the musicians are flautists and players upon cymbals, citherns, lyres and *scabilla*—feet cymbals. Nymphs perform a rhythmic dance and sing an Augustan song. But we have no authentic remains of Roman song. The second interlude begins with a Germanic action representing the pantomime of "Dr. Faustus" in the sixteenth century, with the singing of an unspecified German folksong. Here we should have been on firm historical ground, but the action is to be omitted. The second action, French, is devoted to the meeting on the Field of the Cloth of Gold, with the music already mentioned.

The third action, Spanish-Italian, is a representation of the Commedia dell' Arte on the Place of St. Mark, Venice, about 1630. The theme, which is burlesqued, is the first in the opera of "Don Giovanni," as we know it. Here Mr. Mackaye saves himself from the charge of anachronism by leaving his date indefinite. The original Spanish play on the subject of Don Juan was Tirso de Moline's, produced in 1622. A translation was given in Italy for the first time in 1652. It was promptly burlesqued by Torelli, whose pantomimists performed it in Paris in 1657. Mr. Mackaye's data is only approximately correct. Nothing is said specifically about the music to be played in the scene. The third interlude is the English, showing folk plays and dances described in The Tribune a few weeks ago. Mr. Cecil J. Sharp has provided the traditional music and dances. It will be the only bit of pageantry which will bring us the real music of the period.

In discussing the music for the Shakespearian masque "Caliban" Arthur Farwell, the composer, said that he wishes it understood that he has in no way attempted, except in rare instances, to make the music archæologically correct; that he has striven frankly to write modern music to what he calls an intensely modern theme. In, for instance, such a song as "Come unto these yellow sands," for which there have been many musical settings, Mr. Farwell has contented himself with writing his own music without regard for the Elizabethan spirit. In giving the reason for this he said:

"'Caliban by the Yellow Sands' is not an Elizabethan masque. It is true that it is founded on Shakespeare's 'Tempest,' and much of Shakespeare's own language is used, but it is none the less, in spirit and intention, essentially modern. So it is that I have striven to write modern music for this modern theme, and though in a few places, such as in 'The Field of the Cloth of Gold,' where I have introduced some old French melodies, these cases are few and far between. In fact, in the music for the masque proper, the only portion for which I wish to be judged, I stand or fall on my own original production. It is the most difficult and the most complicated task I have ever attempted, and yet the most interesting.

"The difficulties and the complexity of the subject were almost beyond comprehension. Music had to be written for the action of the masque proper, for the inner-stage scenes and for the interludes. The masque proper takes place on the Greek stage; the inner-scenes on an Elizabethan stage set back where would be the temple of the Greek stage, while the interludes take place on the ground before the Greek stage. The orchestra and chorus are placed above the Elizabethan stage. The music I have written for the masque consists of every conceivable form. Most of the actors' words have to be spoken to the accompaniment of orchestral music. Then there is choral singing, purely orchestral compositions, songs, and mere cries or entrance fanfares. In the case of the music for the interludes this is used merely to accompany the pantomime for the massed crowds before the Greek stage.

"In the case of these interludes I have met with great difficulty, inasmuch as the stage management required many changes, while even now we do not know if all are to be given. The Germanic interlude, for instance, may be omitted because of the spirit produced by the war. At all events, I do not care to be held altogether responsible for this fact. Here I have borrowed freely wherever I have found what seemed suitable—old dances, old songs, music of all sorts have been here grist to my mill. In fact, this part of the masque has had to be hurried and then changed at the last moment. At first, for instance, we intended to have the orchestra on the ground, but now it is placed over the inner-stage, and from this point it will accompany the action.

"The orchestra, which will be under Mr. Koemmenich's direction, will number eighty musicians; the chorus will be composed of 500. As it will be impossible, however, to place more than 350 singers on the platform over the stage, 150 will always be allowed to watch the performance. As to the effectiveness of the performance, this is, of course, largely a gamble. We can never judge the acoustics until we have tried them. It will probably be impossible really to hear the words of the masque, and for their enjoyment it will probably be necessary to know the book. The real effectiveness must depend upon the broad, massed effects.

"I have had considerable experience in the music for masques, and I feel that 'Caliban' is a great advance over the others. My first try was at the pageant in Darien, Conn. Here the effect was dissipated by spreading the audience over a vast extent of territory, so that neither the words nor the music could be heard. At the stadium here, however, we have concentrated the spectators, and have their attention. While in a great pageant it is, of course, impossible, even with such concentration, to obtain the delicate shadings possible in a theatre, there is a gain in sweep and breadth. I feel confident that the pageant movement, now in its merest infancy, will in time sweep the world as a great democratic art-form. Indoor musical art seems to me now trivial compared with the vast horizons opened by this democratic movement.

"Of the music I have written myself for 'Caliban' I feel particularly interested in the chorus from the 'Antigone' of Sophocles, the mixed chorus of 'War' and the mixed chorus for 'The Field of the Cloth of Gold,' 'Glory and Serenity.' At all events, it is by my original production that I wish my music to be judged. I fully realize that historically it is full of flaws."

MUSIC NOTES.

Leo Ornstein, whose piano recitals are being hailed in some circles as the latest note in the exposition of futuristic music, is to appear in conjunction with Miss Vera Barstow, violinist, at Aeolian Hall this afternoon. He will play, of his own works, with Miss Barstow a new sonata for violin and piano, and on the programme there are also three new impressions for the violin—"Olga," "Natascha" and "Sonja"—the first of which is dedicated to Miss Barstow.

The Bay Ridge Choral Society is rehearsing for a concert to be given in the auditorium of the Bay Ridge High School on the evening of June 5. The rehearsals are proceeding every Wednesday evening at Public School 140, Sixtieth Street, west of Fourth Avenue. The officers of the society are Paul E. Theis, president; Miss Hanna Bachman, vice-president; Miss Evelyn Koster, secretary; Robert C. Utess, treasurer; Miss Grace Higgins, librarian, and Marcus Kellerman, musical director.

"Die Walküre" is to be performed in the Yale Bowl, at New Haven, under the auspices of the Yale School of Music, on the evening of Monday, June 5. Mr. Bodanzky will conduct, and the cast will embrace Mme. Gadski, Mme. Kurt, Mme. Schumann-Heink, Johannes Sembach, Clarence Whitehill and Carl Braun.

The benefit performance that is to take place at the Metropolitan Opera House on Tuesday afternoon for the Actors' Fund of America will include many of the most famous operatic and concert stars now in America. Through the courtesy of the board of directors of the Metropolitan Opera Company, the second act of "Madama Butterfly" will be given, with Miss Geraldine Farrar in the title role, supported by Antonio Scotti, Rita Fornia, Angelo Bada and Pietro Audisio. Georgio Polacco will direct the full Metropolitan Opera House orchestra. Luisa Villani, Luca Botta, Andrea de Segurola and Anna Fitziu will also appear, and Fritz Kreisler and Leopold Godowsky will play numbers which they have specially arranged for the occasion. There will also be a ballet and special novelties.

John McCormack has arranged to give a benefit concert at the Century Theatre on Tuesday evening, May 23, the entire proceeds of which will go to help relieve the suffering poor of Dublin. Otto H. Kahn has donated the use of the theatre for the occasion. The Drama League, which is presenting "The Tempest" at the theatre during that week, has kindly coöperated with Mr. Kahn by withdrawing the performance for that evening. Mr. McCormack will be assisted by Mr. McBeath, violinist, and Mr. Schneider, pianist. Mrs. McCormack is organizing a women's auxiliary to sell boxes, souvenir programmes, etc. Mr. McCormack contemplates giving benefits for the same object in both Boston and Chicago.

The People's Symphony Concerts' quarter of a million dollar endowment fund, which was started by S. R. Guggenheim's donation of $10,000 toward the first $100,000, is growing. Among many smaller contributions looms the recent pledge of Dr. James Douglas for $5,000. In addition to this a committee has been formed from among the members of the People's Symphony Auxiliary Club for the purpose of raising $10,000 from among their own number in donations of from $1 to $35. It has been decided to run two series of chamber concerts at the municipal auditorium of the Washington Irving High School next year, one on Friday evenings and one on Saturday evenings. Both the Kneisel and Flonzaley quartets will play in each series.

The Flonzaley Quartet has decided upon an innovation for next season, in presenting its subscribers with complimentary tickets for an extra concert, which will be devoted exclusively to novelties, and which will be available to the general public at regular box office prices.

"The Song of Miriam," by Franz Schubert, will be sung under the direction of Dr. William C. Carl this evening in the First Presbyterian Church, Fifth Avenue and Twelfth Street. The solo part will be sustained by Miss Margaret Harrison, assisted by the full choir of the Old First Church. Preceding the cantata Dr. Carl will give an organ recital, beginning at 7:40 p. m.

The Misses Luisa Morales-Macedo, Margaret Jamison and Phyllida Ashley have rendered their services to aid the stricken people of Poland, and on Friday evening, May 19, at 8:15 o'clock, they will give a piano recital in Aeolian Hall for the Polish Victims' Relief Fund. Miss Morales-Macedo is of a distinguished Peruvian family, and her brother was a delegate from Peru to the San Francisco medical congress and to the Pan-American congress in Washington. Miss Jamison is the niece of Archibald Mitchell, of Norwich, Conn., who has a collection of rare old violins.

On Monday evening, May 22, Frederic Hoffman, an American barytone, will be heard in a song recital in the Myrtle Room of the Waldorf-Astoria. His programme will consist of German and French folk songs. Mr. Hoffman plays his own piano accompaniments. He will be assisted by Emelie Hoffman, mezzo-soprano.

After a busy season, in which she appeared in more than fifty concerts, Mme. Julia Culp, the famous Dutch lieder singer, and her accompanist, Coenraad V. Bos, sailed for home last Thursday. After spending a short time in Holland she will proceed to Berlin, where she will spend the summer.

The annual examinations of the Guilmant Organ School will begin May 15 and continue throughout the week. The Board of Examiners will be: Professor Samuel A. Baldwin of the College of the City of New York, and Clarence Dickinson, head of the music department of the Union Theological Seminary. The fifteenth commencement and graduation exercises will be held under the direction of Dr. William C. Carl Thursday evening, May 25, at 8 o'clock, in the First Presbyterian Church, Fifth Avenue and Twelfth Street.

New York to Have Much Good Music This Summer

Popular Priced Concerts in Madison Square Garden and Choral Music in Parks Urged by Commissioner Ward—Garden May Be Redecorated.

It is becoming evident that New York is to have an abundance of music this summer, more music than it has possessed for several years in the past. This fact is due to the establishment of an orchestra which is to give popular concerts in Madison Square Garden to an extent not before made possible, and to the efforts of Park Commissioner Cabot Ward to introduce choral music in the parks. The permanent establishment of an orchestra for the presenting of good music during the hot months has long been a dream of the musical uplifters as well as the real wish of many music lovers who are marooned in the city throughout the hot months. There have been several sporadic attempts to give such concerts, and last summer eight were presented by the Russian Symphony Orchestra in the Garden, with considerable success. Yet there has been no organized effort to provide our public with any permanent summer orchestra, and certainly no effort to make the surroundings of these concerts attractive. It is toward the consummation of these things that a committee, on which are included Otto H. Kahn, Mrs. Willard Straight and Mrs. W. K. Vanderbilt, has been formed. Though it is not yet definitely decided that New York during the coming summer is to have a series of popular-priced concerts, this looks at the present moment as exceedingly probable. Neither the orchestra nor the leader has as yet been chosen, but Madison Square Garden will be the scene of the concerts. As to the leader, it is understood that Artur Bodanzky, Giorgio Polacco and Arnold Volpe have all been considered. The plan of these concerts originated largely in the brain of Miss Martha Maynard, and Miss Maynard has this to say of her project:

"Our idea is to present New York with the best music in attractive surroundings and for popular prices. The great New York public, and that great public goes, alas! neither to the seashore or the mountains, is hungry for music. The success of the few hastily prepared concerts I arranged with the aid of 'The Globe' last summer at Madison Square Garden proved conclusively to me that a permanent summer orchestra would be welcomed. These concerts were well attended, an average of four thousand a performance, and the audiences were drawn from all classes, from East Siders to wealthy music lovers. We lost no money and we gained much experience.

"We learned, odd as it may seem, that the summer audiences did not care for light music. The nights we presented full symphonies were our most crowded nights, and the night devoted to American music a disaster! No; our summer public yearns for the best and highest in musical art, for the things given during the winter by the Philharmonic and the New York Symphonies, but at lower prices. We intend to redecorate Madison Square Garden, making it a real garden, with ferns, palms, and shady walks. Then we intend to provide an excellent system of refreshments, probably served during the intermission. We found the noise made by the waiters during the performance of music spoils its effect, and so it is probable that we will not serve any refreshments while the concerts are on. Moreover, the concerts will be strictly prohibition.

"As to the orchestra itself, we have made no definite plans, but it will be a fine one, led by a leader of note. Many names have been suggested, but none has as yet been decided on. With the support of Mr. Kahn and the others I feel confident that New York will at last possess a summer orchestra which will mean much to both the social and artistic life of the city."

So much for the scheme of a summer orchestra, to the success of which go the prayers of all who have to listen to the school of Irving Berlin if they would have their music in July or August! New York's summer official music is under the control of the Commissioner of Parks, and, much to the disgust of the present incumbent of that position, Mr. Cabot Ward, the Board of Estimate a year ago cut the music appropriation in half. Yet Commissioner Ward, by doing away with political bandmasters, has been enabled to give better music and nearly as much of it as was given when the appropriation was double what it is at present. Commissioner Ward, in discussing his reforms, made no bones about their unpopularity with many of the politicians.

In the old days the city's money was given out to any number of so-called "leaders," who with this money were required to give three or four concerts and to provide the musicians. The result was obvious. The leader got together eight or nine of his political friends and with them formed a "band." If he had five friends who thought they could play the cornet, why then the band consisted of five cornetists and four others! The quality of the music produced was, of course, infernal.

"When I entered into my duties I determined to reform all this, so I divided the city into three sections, not including Central Park, and for each of these sections appointed a really capable musician and secured for him a band of eighteen pieces. These bands now go about their districts playing in the parks and giving vastly better concerts for very much less money. What the city needs is an amphitheatre where concerts can be given by orchestras. At present the city possesses no such place. As has been proven in Central Park, orchestral concerts are impossible in the open air unless aided by some such sounding-board. The music of the strings is completely dissipated to all except those who are close up to the musicians. So it is that at present bad music, with its reliance upon broad effects, is the only satisfactory music for the parks. Some day I hope the Board of Estimate will see the necessity of the public's musical education, and not consider our park music merely an amusement and trimmings. When that time arrives we will have in Central Park and in other parks natural amphitheatres treated so that orchestras can give within them effective concerts.

"The growth of community singing has been one of the marked evidences of the public's desire for open-air music. During the coming summer various singing societies are to give concerts in Central Park and in other parks. Several of these societies have recently been formed and are now training in the school buildings. I am encouraging the idea of having our various foreign colonies—the Slovacs, the Croats, the Czechs, etc.—to give open-air concerts of their folksongs. This idea has really taken hold in various of these colonies, and I believe that the summer will witness a number of exceedingly interesting concerts of folksongs given in our parks.

"In the development of a community spirit, a spirit so needed in this city of diversified interests, where neighbors are generally total strangers to one another, open-air singing should be a decided help. It brings together those who belong together, and it ought to do much toward resolving the chaos so often prevalent in our municipal life. Community singing in the parks has in me an ardent friend."

American Operas and Other Things

A writer in the last issue of "The New Music Review" (who could mistake the tripping and sarcastic pen of Philip Hale?), recording the fact that an American, Paul Allen, recently produced an Italian opera in Florence on the subject of Cooper's "Last of the Mohicans," becomes mildly reminiscent on the subject of American operas. He recalls Arditi's "La Spia," produced at the Academy of Music in 1856, and adds:

"The libretto of 'La Spia' was written by Filippo Manetta. Arditi declared 'that the subject was "truly American."' The critic of 'The Dispatch' agreed with him: 'To the dash and brilliancy of Verdi he unites the flowing harmonies of Donizetti and the savoir faire of Meyerbeer's effects. The subject of this opera is strictly American; and it is so treated, brilliantly and tellingly so.' The ingenious Arditi introduced a martial liberty chorus, a soldier's march and chorus with fife and drum accompaniment, and the tune, 'Hail, Columbia,' in the finale. This opera was sung in Italian, of course. One of the singers, Elise Herister, who afterward became the morganatic wife of the King of Portugal, once lived in Boston."

"Herister" is a misprint; Mr. Hale knows that the lady's name was Hensler and that she was the daughter of a Boston tailor. But there were operas on American subjects long before Arditi enlisted "The Spy." In the Library of Congress at Washington may be found librettos of the following works which were set by foreign composers: "The American Adventurers," "The American Indian," "L'Americana in Europa," "L'Americano" (composed by Piccini), "The Cherokee" (composed by Storace), "Columbus; or a World Discovered," "The Fair American" (music by Thomas Carter, produced at Drury Lane in 1782), "La Famille Americaine" (words by Citoyen Bouilly, who wrote the French libretto on which Beethoven's "Fidelio" is based; music by Citoyen Dalayrac); "Le Huron," "G'Ingleai in America" (a ballet). The American Indian was a popular subject for musical dramatists in the eighteenth century. As for American operas, "The Disappointment; or the Force of Credulity," by Andrew Barton, Esq., of New York, was printed in 1767. It was a ballad opera, the first of its kind made in America so far as we know. Another ballad opera whose text was witten by an American was "The Reconciliation; or the Triumph of Nature," by Peter Markoe, published in Philadelphia in 1790. In 1794 a play with songs, entitled, "Slaves in Algiers; or a Struggle for Freedom," written by Mrs. Rawson, was performed "at the new theatres in Philadelphia and Baltimore." A political play by a woman. There were kings before Agamemnon and queens before Mrs. O. H. P. Belmont.

H. E. K.